

- (iii) transporting and delivering roasted coffee to a grinding circuit;
- (iv) grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus;
- (v) with said container filling apparatus, delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers; and,
- (vi) sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee and to minimize contact of said ground roasted coffee with the air, wherein said steps of grinding said roasted coffee directly into a container filling apparatus and delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers are completed with minimal delay between successive steps to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas liberated from said coffee and to minimize the degassification of said coffee prior to the sealing of said coffee within said containers.
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18. (Once Amended) A method of processing roasted coffee to minimize the loss of carbon dioxide gas and aromatics liberated from the coffee, the method comprising the steps of preparing one or more containers for receiving roasted coffee therein and maintaining said purged containers in a generally upright position, transporting and delivering roasted coffee to a grinding circuit located within an enclosure having an oxygen depleted atmosphere, grinding said coffee directly into a container filling apparatus, with said container filling apparatus delivering said ground coffee directly into said purged containers, sealing said containers to maximize the retention of carbon dioxide and aromatics liberated from said roasted coffee and to minimize the contact of said roasted coffee with the air, said steps of said method completed with minimal delay between successive steps to minimize the loss of